



County of Santa Cruz

0241

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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JANET K. BEAUTZ
FIRST DISTRICT

WALTER J. SYMONS
SECOND DISTRICT

MARDI WORMHOUDT
THIRD DISTRICT

TONY CAMPOS
FOURTH DISTRICT

JEFF ALMQUIST
FIFTH DISTRICT

AGENDA: 1/11/00

January 4, 2000

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

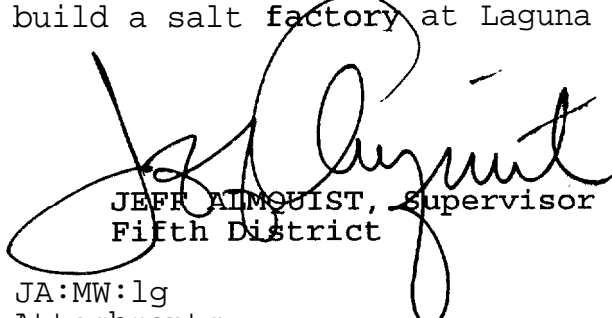
RE: RESOLUTION TO SAVE THE HABITAT AT LAGUNA SAN IGNACIO

Dear Members of the Board:

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the Natural Resources Defense Council, and a coalition of more than fifty Mexican and United States environmental organizations have requested that our Board adopt a resolution calling on the Mitsubishi Corporation to abandon its plans to build a salt factory at Laguna San Ignacio, Mexico. Laguna San Ignacio is the last pristine breeding and calving area in the entire world for California Gray Whales. The UNESCO World Heritage Mission concluded in a report released November 18, 1999, that Mitsubishi's proposed salt factory in Baja California Sur, Mexico would make a "substantial and significant change" resulting in a "transformation" that would violate the "integrity of the site."

Therefore, we would request that the Board of Supervisors join with other cities and counties in California and adopt the attached **resolution** urging Mitsubishi to abandon its plans to build a salt factory at Laguna San Ignacio, Mexico.

Sincerely,


JEFF ALMQUIST, Supervisor
Fifth District


MARDI WORMHOUDT, Supervisor
Third District

JA:MW:lg
Attachments

2087C5

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO.

On the motion of Supervisor
duly seconded by Supervisor
the following resolution is adopted

RESOLUTION TO JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO **SAVE** LAGUNA SAN IGNACIO
IN REQUESTING THAT THE MITSUBISHI CORPORATION PERMANENTLY WITHDRAW
ITS PLAN TO CONSTRUCT A SALTWORKS

WHEREAS, Mitsubishi Corporation, through an entity known as Exportadora de Sal, S.A. (**ESSA**), plans to build the world's largest salt factory in Mexico's Laguna San Ignacio; and

WHEREAS, Laguna San Ignacio is the last pristine breeding and calving area in the entire world for California Gray Whales and its surroundings are also home to the endangered **prong-**horned antelope, burrowing owls, sea lions, black sea turtles, and countless other wildlife; and

WHEREAS, Laguna San Ignacio was designated a whale sanctuary by Mexico in 1976, included within the El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve in 1988, and listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1993; and

WHEREAS, toxic contamination, noise, ship traffic, altered drainage patterns and other degradation this huge facility will bring may force mother whales and their calves from their **age-**old breeding lagoon; and

WHEREAS, in three years, two major spills of toxic brine from a Mitsubishi saltworks in nearby Guerrero Negro have killed more than 94 endangered sea turtles; and

WHEREAS, a Mexican government audit conducted in 1995-96 revealed 298 environmental deficiencies at the existing Guerrero Negro saltworks facility, most of which remain uncorrected; and

WHEREAS, the permanent flooding of 116 square miles of an area designated as a UN World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve is both illegal according to Mexican law and a mockery of international environmental protections; and

WHEREAS, 34 of the world's most distinguished scientists, including nine Nobel Laureates, have warned of an "unacceptable risk" to significant biological resources in and around Laguna San Ignacio; and

WHEREAS, over 750,000 people around the world have sent cards and letters to the President of Mitsubishi urging him to abandon the proposed saltworks; and

RESOLUTION TO JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE LAGUNA SAN IGNACIO IN
REQUESTING THAT THE MITSUBISHI CORPORATION PERMANENTLY WITHDRAW
ITS PLAN TO CONSTRUCT A SALTWORKS
Page 2

WHEREAS, a Mexican-led international coalition of over 50 concerned environmental organizations, including Grupo de los Cien, Union de Grupos Ambientalistas, Centro **Mexicano** de Derecho Ambiental, and Consejo **Para** la Defensa de la Costa **del Pacifico**, together with the International Fund for Animal Welfare and the Natural Resources Defense Council, have formed the Coalition to Save Laguna San Ignacio.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of Santa Cruz County hereby joins the Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio in requesting that the Mitsubishi Corporation immediately and permanently withdraw its plan to construct a saltworks at Laguna San Ignacio.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this _____ day of _____, 2000, by the following vote:

AYES: SUPERVISORS
NOES: SUPERVISORS
ABSENT: SUPERVISORS

JEFF ALMQUIST, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST: _____
Clerk of said Board

Approved as to form:

Kim Elgin

County Counsel 11.5.00

DISTRIBUTION: Governor Gray Davis
Senator Bruce McPherson
Assembly Member Fred Keeley
Assembly Member Peter Frusetta
Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio

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0244 A

Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio

A PROJECT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL
AND MORE THAN 50 MEXICAN CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Jeff Almquist, Chair
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

December 17, 1999

Dear Supervisor Almquist:

On behalf of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the Natural Resources Defense Council and a coalition of more than 50 Mexican and U.S. environmental organizations, I am writing to alert you to a grave threat to one of the world's most significant environmental preserves.

We respectfully request that you join us, and encourage your Board to adopt a resolution calling on the Mitsubishi Corporation to abandon its plans to build a salt factory at Laguna San Ignacio, Mexico.

Mitsubishi Corporation, through an entity known as Exportadora del Sal, S.A. (ESSA) plans to build the world's largest salt factory in Mexico's Laguna San Ignacio, the last pristine breeding and calving area in the entire world for California Gray Whales. These are the same magnificent Gray Whales that twice each year migrate along our California coastline.

Laguna San Ignacio is unique in the world. The lagoon is designated a Biosphere Reserve and like Yosemite in the U.S., it is a U.N.-recognized World Heritage site. Laguna San Ignacio and its surroundings are also home to the endangered prong-horned antelope, burrowing owls, sea lions, black sea turtles and countless other wildlife. Into this fragile ecosystem, Mitsubishi intends to introduce a 116 square mile saltworks with the attendant toxic contamination, ship traffic and noise.

Thirty-four distinguished scientists including nine Nobel Laureates warn that the proposed salt factory poses an "unacceptable risk" to the environment. Seven hundred and fifty thousand people have sent communications to Mitsubishi urging it to abandon its habitat-destructive plans.

Elected leaders throughout the state are being asked to take action to support the campaign to save the habitat at Laguna San Ignacio.

We are asking that you and your colleagues adopt a resolution urging Mitsubishi to abandon its plans. The attached "Don't Buy" and "Divest" sample resolutions may be altered to suit the needs and desires of your Board, and we have copies of all resolutions that have passed to date should they be helpful in drafting your own resolution.

We hope you find the resolutions worthy of your support. Your involvement is urgently needed. Please feel free to contact me at 916-737-9325.

Yours truly,


Phil Giarrizzo

cc: Andrew Schiffrin



0246

Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio

A PROJECT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL
AND MORE THAN 50 MEXICAN CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

***The Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio, a UN World Heritage Site
and home to the California Gray Whales is backed
by Cities and Counties throughout California.***

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Laguna San Ignacio is the cultural and ecological heart of the 6.2-million-acre Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve, the largest protected area in Mexico and Latin America. The Mitsubishi Corporation intends to build the world's largest salt plant there, which would destroy 525,000 acres inside the reserve- an area larger than Rocky Mountain National Park and twice the size of the lagoon. The Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio seeks to persuade Mitsubishi not to build the plant. Cities and Counties throughout California have supported the campaign by passing resolutions urging Mitsubishi to withdraw its plans to construct the salt plan.

Alameda County Board of Supervisors

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

Marin County Board of Supervisors

San Francisco County and City Board of Supervisors

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Berkeley City Council

Cofati City Council

Culver City Council

Davis City Council

Eureka City Council

Folsom City Council

Imperial Beach City Council

La Canada-Flintridge City Council

Los Angeles City Council

Malibu City Council

Pismo Beach City Council

Poway City Council

Richmond City Council

Sacramento City Council

Sand City Council

Sebastopol City Council

Saratoga City Council

Santa Cruz City Council

Trinidad City Council

Vista City Council

Watsonville City Council

West Hollywood City Council

33



0247

UN REPORT WARNS OF DANGERS TO BAJA WHALE SANCTUARY POSED BY MITSUBISHI SALT FACTORY

(Yarmouth Port, MA – 18 Nov.) A UNESCO World Heritage mission concluded in a report revealed today, by the Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio, that Mitsubishi's proposed salt factory in Baja California Sur, Mexico would make a "substantial and significant change," resulting in a "transformation" that would violate the "integrity of site".

The report was prepared following a visit to Mexico in late August 1999, by a team of four international and three Mexican government experts. A copy of the report was provided to the Mexican Government on October 29, 1999. On November 4th, ESSA, the Mitsubishi-Mexican Government joint saltworks venture, issued press statements about the Mission's report, but not the report itself.

Mitsubishi and ESSA deceived the press and public recently by alleging that the UNESCO report gave their controversial Baja salt factory project a "green light." In fact, the opposite is true. The report highlights how the construction of a huge industrial salt factory on Laguna San Ignacio would significantly alter the very characteristics that make the area a World Heritage site. The report states that "[T]he associated installations (industrial area, infrastructure, and pier) would involve major changes to the land inside and near the World Heritage site. At least a part of the area would be transformed into urban and industrial land.... This would constitute a substantial and significant change from the current condition of the site."

Today, the Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio is releasing a full copy of the UN report held in secret by Mitsubishi and ESSA (available exclusively from www.savebajawhales.com). According to Jared Blumenfeld, Director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare's (IFAW) Habitat Program "The World Heritage report is sending a strong message to Mitsubishi that if the corporate giant decides to formalize their plans to destroy Laguna San Ignacio, the UN will act swiftly to examine whether this global treasure be listed as 'In Danger'. Mitsubishi and ESSA can no longer hide behind a report they would not release.

The Mission's report will be considered by the UN World Heritage Committee at its next meeting starting November 26th in Marrakesh, Morocco. Under the terms of the World Heritage Convention, the Committee maintains a List of World Heritage Sites 'In Danger'. In June 1998, members of the Campaign petitioned the Committee to declare the two lagoons which make up the site as 'In Danger'. At its December 1998 session in Kyoto, Japan, the Committee decided to send a Mission to review the status of the site.

During the Marrakesh, meeting the Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio will be providing State Parties additional evidence regarding the poor environmental record of Mitsubishi at their current salt factory in Guerrero Negro. Under pressure from the Mexican government important evidence was left out from the UN report, including the fact that ESSA and Mitsubishi were found responsible for the death of 94 endangered sea turtles. According to Jacob Scherr, Director, International Program, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), "Despite real constraints and pressures that were placed on the UN team by the Mexican authorities, the report still signals significant discomfort with the proposed saltworks at Laguna San Ignacio."

The UN mission report corrects a number of deliberate misrepresentations promoted by Mitsubishi and ESSA:

Mitsubishi Fiction: Salt factory would not fall within the World Heritage Site. (Japan, December 1998).

Fact: "Roughly thirty percent of the projected saltworks is located within the area designated a World Heritage Site" (*UNESCO World Heritage Report, October 1999*).

Mitsubishi Fiction: Mitsubishi and ESSA claimed the report gave them a "green light to pursue the salt project." (*Mexico City, November 3, 1999*).

F a c t : "The mission notes that a review of the proposed saltworks at San Ignacio was not explicitly included in its Terms of Reference because the project proponent had not yet made its submission to the proper authorities." The Mission's only mandate was to decide whether the area was "in danger" under the World Heritage Convention. The Mission did not and could not decide whether to authorize the project. This latter decision can only be made by the Mexican government. (*UNESCO World Heritage Report, October 1999*).

Mitsubishi Fiction: "San Ignacio Lagoon will remain in its pristine form even if the salt project goes ahead." (Japan, October 1999).

Fact: "[S]uch a project would imply the transformation of a large area inside the World Heritage boundaries of Laguna San Ignacio for the construction of evaporation and crystallization ponds. The mission questioned whether this would comply with condition of integrity." (*UNESCO World Heritage Report, October 1999*).

According to Mr Blumenfeld, "It is time for Mitsubishi to wake up and listen to the opposition of 34 of the world's leading scientists (including 9 Nobel winners), 15 of the world's top mutual funds (with \$14 billion in assets) who will not invest in Mitsubishi stock, 800,000 concerned citizens worldwide who have written to the corporate giant calling on them to abandon the project, ten cities in California (including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Eureka, and Santa Cruz) who have passed divestment resolutions against Mitsubishi because of the salt factory plans, the Mexican government's first rejection of Mitsubishi's salt factory plans (1995), and now the UN World Heritage Report." Blumenfeld adds, "Mitsubishi has become an environmental outlaw damaging both their reputation and their bottom line."

The Campaign to Save Laguna San Ignacio is a project of IFAW, NRDC, and more than 50 Mexican environmental organizations.